

Capsule Summary

CE-1506

Principio Iron Scale House Site

Principio

Private

Circa 1889-90

The Principio Company was established in 1720. Beginning in 1725, intensive ironmaking activity started at the site and continued until the American Revolution. After the war, Samuel Hughes operated a cannon factory on the site, and, in 1836, the property passed to Joseph and George Price Whitaker, who made a series of capital improvements to it. Today the property reflects the Whitaker era of ownership.

The scale house enclosed Fairbanks Scales probably used to weigh charcoal wagons as well as pig iron and iron ore. Only foundations and part of the weighing mechanism remain intact. The above ground configuration was likely a platform on which wagons were driven and then weighed.

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN DATA

Geographic Organization:

Eastern Shore

Chronological/Development Period (s):

Agricultural-Industrial Transition: 1781-1835

Industrial-Urban Dominance: 1870-1930

Prehistoric/Historic Period Theme (s):

Economic

Resource Type:

Category: Site

Historic Environment: Village

Historic Functions (s) and Use (s):

Scale House

Known Design Source:

**Maryland Historical Trust
State Historic Sites Inventory Form**

**MARYLAND INVENTORY OF
HISTORIC PROPERTIES**

Survey No. **CE-1506**

Magi No.

DOE ☐ yes ☐ no

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic **Principio Iron Works - Scale House Site**

and/or common **Principio Furnace**

2. Location

street & number **Maryland Route 7 and Principio Creek Bridge** ☐ not for publication

city, town **Principio Furnace** ☒ vicinity of congressional district

state **Maryland** county **Cecil**

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<input type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name **York Building Products**

street & number **1020 N. Hartley Street** telephone no.:

city, town **York** state and zip code **PA 17405**

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. **Cecil County Courthouse** liber **NDS65**

street & number **Main Street** folio **794-98**

city, town **Elkton** state **MD**

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title

date ☐ federal ☐ state ☐ county ☐ local

pository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Survey No. CE-1506

Condition

☐ excellent
☐ good
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated
☒ ruins
☐ unexposed

Check one

☒ unaltered
☐ altered

Check one

☒ original site
☐ moved date of move _____

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

8. Significance

Survey No. CE-1506

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates

Builder/Architect

check: Applicable Criteria: ☒ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D
and/or

Applicable Exception: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Level of Significance: ☐ national ☒ state ☐ local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. CE-1506May, Earl Chapin. Principio To Wheeling. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1945.Robbins, Michael W. The Principio Company. New York: Garland Publishing Co., 1986.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 90 acresQuadrangle name Havre De Grace, MDQuadrangle scale 1:24000UTM References do NOT complete UTM referencesA

Zone	Easting							Northing	

B

Zone	Easting							Northing	

C

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D

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E

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F

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H

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Verbal boundary description and justification

The Principio Iron Works property is bounded by Principio Creek to the east and south, by Maryland Route 7 to the north, and by Principio Station Road to the west.

This boundary encompasses all the resources associated with the historic iron works.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Lee R. Maddex, Project Coordinator Sr.

organization	<u>Institute for the History of Technology & Industrial Archaeology</u>	date	<u>4/30/98</u>
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street & number	<u>1535 Mileground</u>	telephone	<u>(304) 293-3829</u>
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city or town	<u>Morgantown</u>	state	<u>WV 26505</u>
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The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to:	Maryland Historical Trust Shaw House 21 State Circle Annapolis, Maryland 21401 (301) 269-2438	MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST DHCP/DHCD 100 COMMUNITY PLACE CROWNSVILLE, MD 21032-2023 514-7600
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CE-1506

Principio Iron Works-Scale House Site
Cecil County

Section 7.1

The Principio Company was established in 1720. Beginning 1725, intensive ironmaking activity started at the site and continued until the American Revolution. After the war, Samuel Hughes operated a cannon factory on the site, and, in 1836, the property passed to Joseph and George Price Whitaker, who made a series of capital improvements to it. Today, the property reflects the Whitaker era of ownership. The property consists of the Second Empire-style company office building, two 1920s corn cribs, foundational remains of a circa 1836 barn, a circa 1850 tool house, a 1890s wagon barn, standing remains of a 1890s blacksmith/wheelwrights shop, a 1890 charcoal kiln, a circa 1890 wash house, foundational remains of a scale house, foundational remains of two charcoal barns, 1837 charcoal iron blast furnace with hot blast stove and waterpowered blowing engine, partial remains of a 1890 hoist house, a 1890 blower engine house, and a circa 1850 shanty.

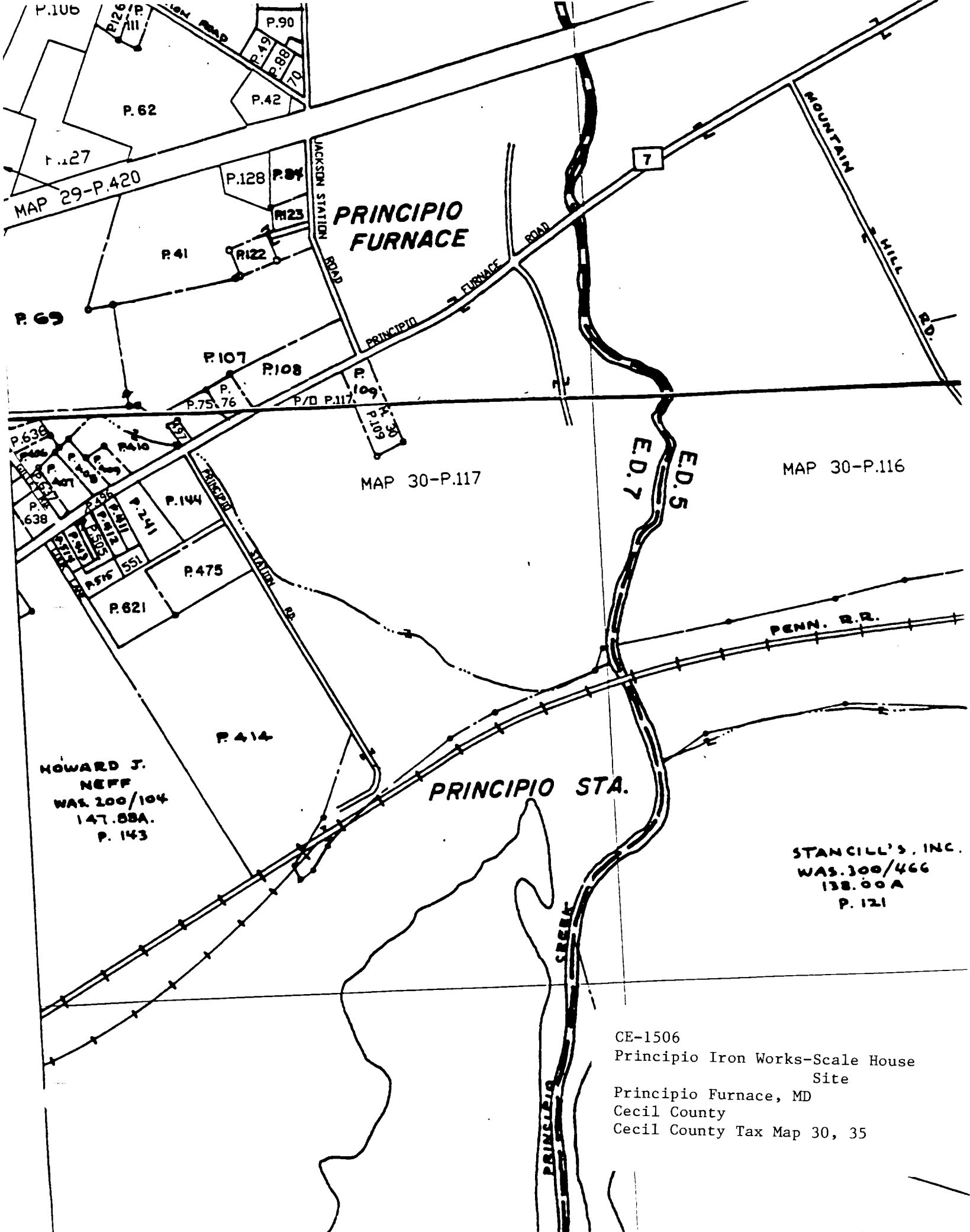
Resource Count: one (1)

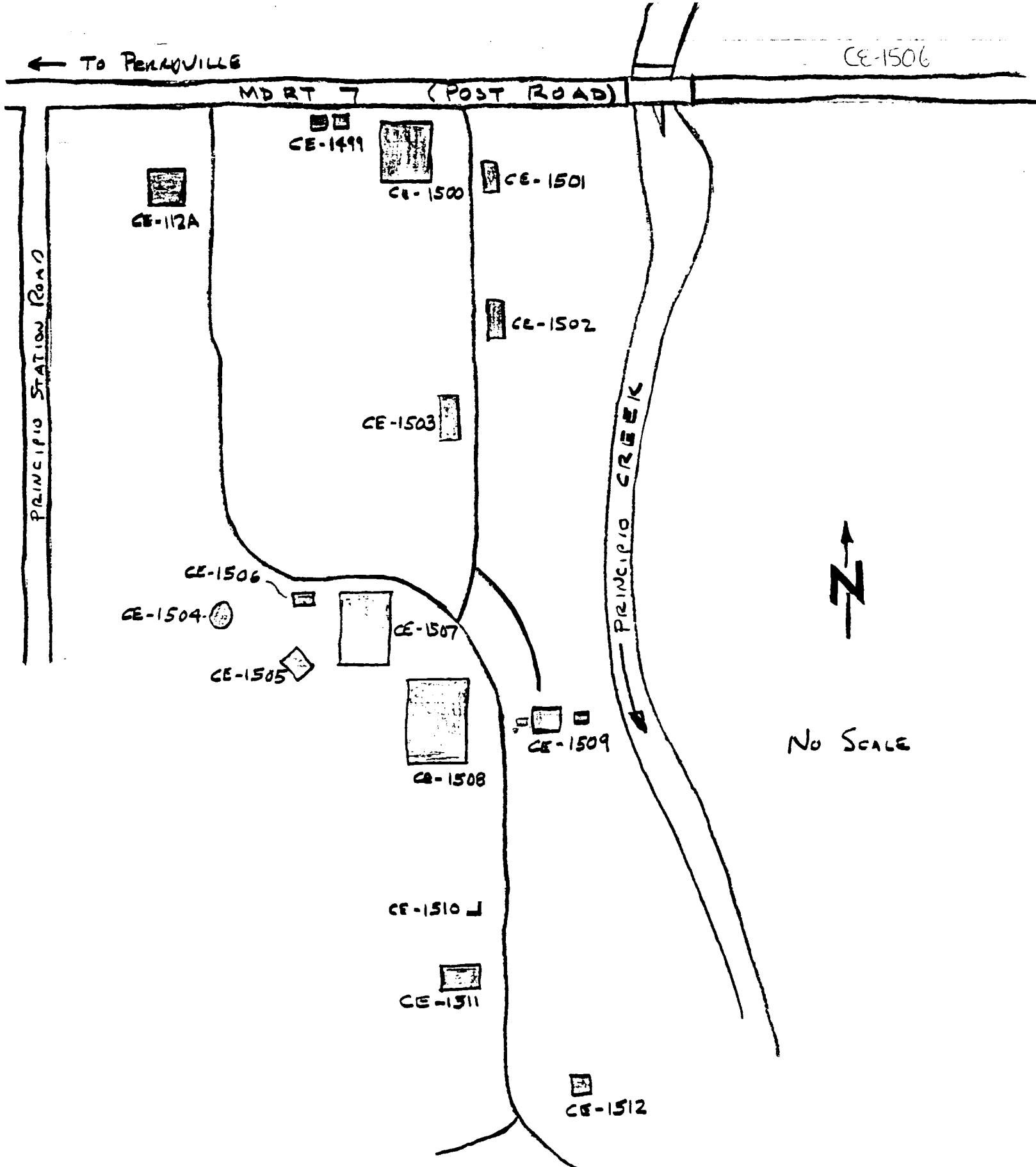
The scale house was built circa 1890. Only foundations and part of the weighing mechanism remain intact. Above ground configuration was probably a platform on which wagons were driven and then weighed.

The scale house enclosed scales likely for weighing charcoal wagons, but probably pig iron and iron ore as well. These were Fairbanks Scales, the most common manufacture of weighing equipment at the time.

The scale house site is significant under Criterion A for the area of industry. A scale house was an important element of the Principio Iron Works and was used to weigh charcoal wagons arriving at the site.

Established in 1720, the Principio Company constructed the Principio Iron Works, the first blast furnace and refinery forge in the Maryland Colony. Located at the head of the Chesapeake Bay, the ironworks plantation consisted of the 1725 Principio Furnace, the 1728 Principio Forge, a store, and dwellings. The Principio Iron Works operated until the time of the American Revolution when they were abandoned. The property was confiscated by the state of Maryland in 1781, and it passed to Colonel Samuel Hughes in 1785. Hughes rebuilt the furnace and added a foundry for the production of cannon. After these works were destroyed by British raiders during the War of 1812, Hughes rebuilt the ironworks, but it bankrupted him and the property passed to his creditors in 1817. The property remained virtually idle for the next two decades when it was first acquired by David Stewart and others in 1834, who in turn sold it Joseph Whitaker II and his brother George Price Whitaker in 1836. The Whitaker brothers completely renovated the aged ironworks, erecting a new blast furnace plant and new worker housing. Importantly, the site was crossed by the recently completed Philadelphia, Wilmington and Baltimore Railroad which created a nexus enabling the ironwork's products to reach larger national markets. Following the Civil War, George Price Whitaker embarked on a second program of capital improvements which included the construction of a new dam, hot blast stove, blowing engine, and waterpowered turbine. Expanding the scope of production at the site, Whitaker, in 1883-84, erected a steampowered forge for the manufacture of wrought iron blooms. The 1837 furnace could not produce enough iron to keep his forge operating continuously and Whitaker commenced a third period of capital improvements to remedy this shortfall. Completed in August 1890, Whitaker erected a cupola-style blast furnace with hot blast stoves, blower engine house, boiler house, hoist house, a cast house, and a scale house, but these improvements were abandoned shortly after his death in December 1890. Control of the property then passed to Whitaker's nephew Nelson E. Whitaker, who chose to close down the furnaces and produce wrought iron blooms only. Bloom production became closely allied with the Tyler Tube and Pipe Company of Washington, Pennsylvania, owned by William P. Tyler, Nelson E. Whitaker's son-in-law. The forge continued to operate until 1925 when production ceased. The storied Principio property reverted to agricultural use.





Principio Island Wonders
RESOURCE SKETCH MAP
MAY 1998
Principio Furnace, Cecil County, Maryland



CE-1506

SCALE House

PRINCIPIO Iron Works

CECIL COUNTY, MARYLAND

LEE R. MADDEX

MARCH 1998 MARYLAND SHPO

VIEW OF SCALE House Floor Beams WITH SCALE PANTS

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